(a) whether it is a fact that oil companies have raised the prices of certain oils in the recent past;

(b) whether these companies had taken the permission of Government in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if so, the steps Government proposes to take against the companies; and

(e) whether Government would issue necessary guidelines to check the arbitrary rise in the prices of oil effected by oil companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (e) Currently, Government is modulating the retail selling price of the four sensitive petroleum products namely Petrol, Diesel, Domestic LPG and PDS Kerosene in such a manner as not to pass on the burden of spiral ing international oil prices to the consumer and so as to insulate the economy from the inflationary impact of international oil prices. Despite the steep increase in the international oil prices, the prices of Domestic LPG and PDS Kerosene have not been increased since November, 2004 and March, 2002 respectively. The Government has allowed a marginal increase in petrol and diesel prices by Rs. 2/litre and Re.l/litre respectively with effect from 15.2.2008.

For products other than the sensitive petroleum products such as Naphtha, Aviation Turbine Fuel, Furnace Oil, Low Sulphur Heavy Stock, Bitumen etc., the oil companies are free to fix the prices based on commercial considerations.

Mathura Oil Refinery

†4271. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that three Sulphur Recovery Units set up in Mathura Oil Refinery are not in operation or lying closed;

(b) whether it is also a fact that emission of chemicals and gas due to closure of Sulphur Recovery Units of Oil Refineries is posing threat to environment;

(c) whether Government is taking steps to revive Sulphur Recovery Units; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) All the three Sulphur Recovery Units (SRU) at Mathura Refinery are in operation.

(b) No, Sir. The closure of SRU may cause increase in sulphur emissions but not exceed the allowable limits. All refineries have surplus SRU capacity to take care of additional load due to increased processing of 'high sulphur' crude oil. Alternatively, in the absence of SRU, low sulphur' crude oil, fuels and Natural Gas are used to keep the emissions within the allowable limits.

(c) and (d) All refineries are continuously increasing the capacity of Sulphur Recover)' Units through augmentation of existing units or addtion of new unit to take care of additional hour gas generation as well as to produce clean fuel as per 'Auto Fuel Policy'. The existing units are also revamped to increase the sulphur recovery efficiency more than 99.9%.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.